Congressman Baird Secures Key Funding for Area Shellfish, Agriculture Research (June 8, 2005)

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Brian Baird today announced he helped secure nearly $8.5 million for research projects that will benefit Southwest Washingtonï¿½s shellfish and agriculture industries. The funding was approved in the Houseï¿½s FY 2006 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

ï¿½These research projects will benefit Southwest Washington both economically and environmentally,ï¿½ said Congressman Brian Baird. ï¿½This funding will help strengthen our shellfish and agriculture industries and ensure they remain economically viable for years to come.ï¿½

The projects Congressman Baird secured funding for include:

Aquaculture Research Initiative -

The House approved $764,000 to expand Washington State Universityï¿½s Aquaculture Research Initiative, which will help strengthen Pacific Countyï¿½s shellfish industry. The shellfish industry is the Countyï¿½s second-largest employer and produces nearly a quarter of the oysters consumed in the United States. The proliferation of the aquatic weed Spartina alterniflora and destructive burrowing ghost shrimp off Pacific Countyï¿½s coast has threatened the shellfish industry. This funding will help researchers find ways to ameliorate the damage caused by Spartina and ghost shrimp.

Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research -

The House approved $422,000 to help the Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research continue its study of berries and grapes. This research is critical to the survival of the cranberry industry in the Pacific Northwest. In fact, the Northwest cranberry industry survived an influx of under-priced imports in part because of innovative technologies pioneered by the Center. Continued Center funding will help the Northwest cranberry industry remain competitive in the international marketplace.

National Laboratory for Molluscan Broodstock -

The House approved $348,000 to continue the Molluscan Broodstock Program (MBP), which genetically selects and manages oyster broodstock in order to increase commercial production of Pacific oysters on the West Coast. MBP was established in 1995 at Oregon State University. Since that time, the program has planted and evaluated about 900 oyster families at commercial grow-out sites from Alaska to California. Results indicate that oyster yields derived from genetically selected MBP broodstock are greater than those derived from "wild," unselected broodstock. As a result, commercial hatcheries have begun using MBP broodstock for large-scale seed production.

Shellfish Research Program at Oregon State University -

The House approved continued funding to help researchers at Oregon State University investigate how to create a globally competitive, sustainable aquaculture industry in the U.S. This research has proven very beneficial in addressing both the immediate and long-term needs of the shellfish industry.

Agriculture Research Service Facility in WA -

The House approved $3,625,000 for a state-of-the-art agriculture research facility in Pullman. Agriculture Research

Service and Washington State University have a long history of collaborating on national and regional projects, jointly training students, and contributing to the economic productivity and profitability of agriculture on the Pacific Northwest. The new facility will strengthen this partnership and provide improved research laboratories and equipment.

Competitiveness of WA Agricultural Products -

The House approved $647,000 to support the International Marketing Program for Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT) at Washington State University and CINTRAFOR at the University of Washington. These programs aim to increase the level of agricultural exports from Washington.

Organic Cropping Research & Education NW -

The House approved $359,000 for a comprehensive organic farming research and education program. The program targets five critical areas: the development of certified organic experimental land for major crops; organic seed protection and production technology; understudy management for tree fruits, vines, and berries; organic week control methods for annual crops; and effect of product practices on food quality.

Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project at Oregon State University -

The House approved $682,000 for research aimed at mapping genetic attributes of barley and identifying economically viable agronomic and quality traits that can be incorporated into breeding programs in the Pacific Northwest.

Cool Season Legume Research -

The House approved $564,000 to improve the efficiency and the sustainability of the U.S. dry pea, fresh pea, lentil, and chickpea industries. The ongoing project, started in 1991, involves federal and state university scientists in cooperative research driven by industry needs.

Solutions to Environmental and Economic Problems (STEEP) -

The House approved $640,000 for STEEP, an innovative interdisciplinary research/education program that focuses on developing profitable cropping systems technologies for controlling cropland soil erosion and protecting environmental quality. Initiated in 1975, STEEP is a collaborative project involving scientists and educators from the University of Idaho, Oregon State University, Washington State University, and USDA-Agricultural Research Service, in cooperation with grower organizations and agricultural support.

Northwest Wine Grape Foundation -

The House approved $322,000 to expand and maintain the Grape Foundation Block at Washington State Universityï¿½s Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center (IAREC) to serve the needs of Pacific Northwest grape growers. This program, which was developed in conjunction with the wine industry, is aimed at developing virus-free vineyards and evaluating the performance of grape plants in the unique Pacific Northwest grape-growing region.
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